

# THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOLUME XIX. No. 4

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THE forest of masts was rapidly disappearing as one boat after another, with bright colors, high bows and sterns, joined the swan-like procession down the narrow river toward the Gulf. It looked as if a dozen lumbermen were cutting down a wood of majestic trees, and that soon not one would be left. The wharf

was swarming with women and children who were bidding farewell to those on board the boats. A cloud of sea gulls hovered about, dipping and circling, and wondering when this crowd of people was going to throw them bits of food. A hot afternoon sun shone down upon the activity through a smoky haze, for a land breeze was blowing the smoke from a grass fire toward the Gulf.

The sponge fleet was leaving the little Athens to comb the valuable plants from the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. Weeks, perhaps months, would pass before they would return with their decks filled with all kinds of sponges. The partings were sad, and yet the people were used to this separation. Tom Mexis and Manuel Malessas stood by the brick wall of the sponge exchange. Neither boy had spoken for some time. They were too busy watching the departure of the fleet.

"Don't you wish we were old enough to be on one of those boats?" Manuel asked enthusiastically.

"No!" A scowl appeared between Tom's eyes.

Manuel looked at his companion for several moments without speaking. His look of astonishment turned to one of disgust.

"Ho! Still afraid of the water!"

"Well, I go in swimming and run my little motor boat up and down the river," Tom defended himself.

"What's the river?" Manuel boasted. "I'm not afraid of any octopus or shark that's in the Gulf. Why, a diver has on

a suit, doesn't he? If a shark comes snooping around, you just shoot air bubbles at him and that scares the big boy away. If an octopus gets hold of you with his long tentacles, you just pull the signal line and the other divers come around and help you."

Tom's lips began to grow white under this recital, but Manuel did not notice it. He was watching the last sponge boat as it disappeared from view.

"Of course, some of the divers get paralysis from diving into too deep water or staying under too long. Sixty or eighty feet is deep enough until you have been at it for a long time."

Tom bit his trembling lower lip and dug his hands into his trouser pockets. He wished that Manuel would keep still. But his friend was too enthusiastic over the subject to stop.

"Gee! Just think of getting caught out there in a big blow and racing before the storm for days — Come on, Tom, let's get in your boat and follow the fleet out for a few miles."

"I won't go, I'm — I'm afraid to."

"Shucks! What are you afraid of?" Manuel persisted.

"What if the boat should tip over?"

"Well, you can swim, can't you?"

"Yes, but a big sea monster might grab me, and pull me under," Tom replied with a shudder. There were tears in his eyes.

Manuel began to laugh uproariously. This was too good to keep. He rushed down to the dock where several boys were

waiting for a tourist to throw a nickel or a dime into the oily water so that they might dive for it.

"Look-it, look-it!" Manuel called. "Tom's crying. He's afraid to go out on the Gulf in his boat."

A gale of laughter came from the boys as they turned to look. Tom lowered his head, turned, and fled. But the taunts followed him.

"Baby, baby! 'Fraid of the water!" "Big shark will get our Tommy!"

Tom sought refuge in a coffee shop which his friend, Big Leon, kept. A half dozen boys followed him to the door. Big Leon looked up from his work of cleaning the floors. He sized up the situation at once.

"Get out of here," he commanded with a threatening movement. "You let Tom alone."

The boys rushed away and Big Leon turned to Tom.

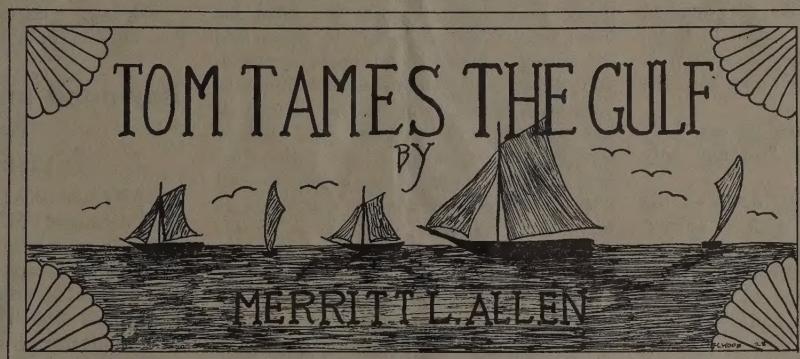
"What they pestering you for now?" "I'm afraid of the Gulf," Tom's voice quivered.

"Well, it's nothing to play with. I got diver's sickness and the paralysis never left me. That's why I have to run a coffee shop instead of being out there," with a sweeping gesture toward the Gulf. "Never be afraid of anything, Tom. When the time comes for you to take a man's part, just grit your teeth and do your best."

A cloud of smoke rolled into the shop and Big Leon hastened to shut the door.

"I don't like that fire so close to the village with the fleet out. No one should try to burn off their grass and underbrush when there's a land breeze," Big Leon complained.

Tom went to the door and looked cautiously about. The coast was clear, for there were no boys about. Tom slipped away from the coffee shop and scurried home.



It was about seven o'clock that evening when Tom heard a great commotion out in the streets. He hurried outdoors and found that the village was enveloped in a cloud of dense smoke. He ran into Manuel.

"What's the trouble, Manuel?"

"The wind is blowing that fire toward the village. Something's got to be done. Just wait till it reaches that swamp grass!"

"Can't something be done?"

"Everybody is getting pails, and they are going to try and soak the grass between the village and the fire. Come on, we can help."

The boys hurried down the street, coughing as they ran. As they passed the coffee shop, Big Leon called to them.

"It's no use, boys. They can keep it checked, but if we can't get any help the village will go."

"But isn't there anything we can do?" Tom wailed. "Oh, if the fleet had only waited one more day."

Big Leon brought his fist down on the palm of his left hand with a smack. "That's it! The fleet can't be very far out. They will anchor and make an early start in the morning. One of you boys get in Tom's motor boat and go out to them for help."

But Manuel shook his head. "No, no, it's dark. I'm afraid to go."

Tom looked at Big Leon.

"You know I couldn't go with my crippled limbs, Tom. It's up to you. Remember what I told you about gritting your teeth and doing your best."

Tom felt his knees giving way, and his lips and tongue suddenly became so dry that he could not appeal to Manuel to go. He gazed with agonized eyes toward Big Leon, but the crippled man only returned Tom's beseeching look with a shake of the head. Tom turned toward the smoke. A sudden gust of wind lifted the cloud for a moment and Tom saw a burst of flames in the distance. He knew that in a moment he would be groveling on the street from fright. With a dry sob, he started on a tottering run toward the wharf. There, Tom spun the engine of his little motor boat, *Hydra*, and cast off the tie ropes. He huddled down by the steering wheel as he backed water and then headed down the narrow river toward the Gulf. The distant fire lighted up the night sufficiently to see the shore lines.

Tom shrank within himself as he made the mouth leading into the Gulf. He half expected to see some gigantic hand reach out of the darkness and drag him into the water. But nothing out of the ordinary happened. The sharp barking of his motor and the pounding of the surf on the sand bars and beach were the only noises. Tom had heard that the fleet was

taking a north-western course, and now he turned his boat in that direction. He soon drew away from the smoke, and the moon made a silver beam across the choppy water. Gradually he relaxed and began to look about. The terror of the Gulf seemed foolish out here in the beautiful night, but a new fear gripped him with a dozen questions. What if he could not find the fleet? What if he did not find them in time? What if something should happen to his engine?

On through the night, his little motor-boat bobbed through the waves. And then, far in the distance, Tom made out the lights on the boats of the sponge fleet. He felt like jumping up and down in his boat. A feeling of exultation filled his heart until it seemed ready to jump into his throat. Manuel had made so much fun of him and yet he had not dared to come out here in the night. Tom felt like jumping into the water just to show that he was not afraid of what the Gulf held in its depths. He began to call when he neared the boats. The sound of his voice and the "phut-phut" of his motor brought many forms to the railings of the boats.

"The village is on fire! Hurry to the rescue!" Tom shouted again and again.

Men tumbled into the motor boat as the *Hydra* bumped against the *Dolphin*. Without shutting off the motor, Tom headed back for the return trip. Soon he heard other motor-boats, which were used to carry the sponges from the diving boats to the larger ships, following him. Most of them had more powerful engines than the *Hydra* and they passed him near at hand. Tom was kept busy for a time explaining about the fire. It seemed to Tom that they would never reach the land. He felt as if the *Hydra* was only creeping. But the lighthouse on the island, which marked the mouth of the river, kept growing brighter and brighter. The *Hydra* was the last boat to work its

way up the river and to tie up at the wharf. The men scrambled from the boat, followed by Tom.

Tom was in the very midst of the long fight which took place that night. The fire had gained such headway that it was hard to control, but everyone worked like beavers with pails, garden hose, axes and shovels. When the dawn broke, the fire was out. There were only two or three houses badly damaged. Tom sought out Big Leon.

"Well, I did it!"

"That you did, and you are going to be a big hero around here."

Tom grinned sheepishly. "And to think I have been such a big coward."

"Oh no, Tom, you were afraid, but you were never a coward."

## Raymond and the Rattling Bones

By MINERVA HUNTER

UNCLE HAL'S noisy motorcycle stopped in front of the apartment where Raymond lived. Raymond heard it and ran out to talk with this wonderful uncle who was attending the medical school. Uncle Hal was going to be a doctor, just like Grandfather.

"What are you going to do Saturday night?" Uncle Hal asked Raymond.

"Nothing much. Why?" Raymond replied.

"Well, you see," Uncle Hal explained, "I am thinking of giving a Hallowe'en party and I want you to go out home and help me get ready and help me at the party, too. Can you do it? It is going to be the spookiest party that ever was."

"I just love spooky parties," Raymond replied, "and I am sure Mother will let me go."

"All right. I shall come by for you on my way home from school. Be ready at two o'clock."

At two o'clock Saturday afternoon, Raymond was ready and waiting. Soon Uncle Hal rounded the corner and stopped to let Raymond get on the seat behind him. Then the noisy motorcycle said, "Put, put, put" and away they went so fast there was no chance to talk until they reached the big house in the suburb where Grandfather, Grandmother and Uncle Hal lived.

Uncle Hal got to work right away making lanterns from the pumpkins that he had brought in from the country. He cut some smiling faces and some frowning faces. Uncle Hal had gotten autumn leaves and cornstalks in the country, too, and Grandmother and Raymond helped him decorate with these.



"He began to call when he neared the boats."

"You know what a skeleton is, don't you?" Uncle Hal asked.

"Certainly. I grew up with Grandfather's," Raymond replied.

"Are you afraid of it?"

"Of course not!" Raymond laughed.

"Have you ever handled it?" Uncle Hal continued to question.

"Hal," Grandmother asked, "what is the idea of so many questions?"

"I wanted to be sure Raymond is not afraid of it."

"I am not afraid of it. It is an old one and I have handled it often. Grandfather said it was not much good any more and he has allowed me to play with it."

"Good!" exclaimed Uncle Hal. "I want to play a trick on the crowd tonight. I have arranged to tell a spooky tale out in the hall beside the steps. Lights will be low and the tale is a hair-raiser. When I come to the part that tells of a skeleton that came through the ceiling, I want you to be upstairs and let down the skeleton to dangle right over the crowd. I have rigged up a pulley and the ropes, and will attach the skeleton at the last minute. Are you sure you will not be afraid?"

"It will be fun!" Raymond laughed. So it was arranged.

During the first part of the party Raymond was wrapped in a sheet like every one else. He carried Grandmother's hearth broom above his head to make him look as tall as the other guests. Later they took off their sheets and masks and had games. Then Uncle Hal gave Raymond a signal and the two of them slipped upstairs and tied the skeleton to the rope. They had practiced before the crowd came so that Raymond knew exactly what to do.

Uncle Hal went back downstairs and the crowd assembled in the hall near the stairway and Uncle Hal began telling his story in the dim light of the lanterns. When he came to the part about the skeleton that came through the ceiling, Raymond loosened the rope and let the skeleton descend slowly. The listeners did not notice what was above them until Raymond began jerking the cord as Uncle Hal had told him to do and the bones began to rattle. Then every one looked up and some screamed, then every one laughed. Raymond drew the skeleton back up and tied the rope securely to the banisters and went downstairs again.

After the party one of the guests took Raymond home so he would be sure not to miss Sunday school the next morning. Mother was waiting up for him and he showed her the lovely lantern Uncle Hal had given him. Inside the pumpkin was a bag of nuts Grandmother had sent.

"We had better not eat any nuts tonight," Mother advised, "it is getting late and might give us bad dreams."



## THE CROW'S NEST

BY  
WAITSTILL  
HASTINGS  
SHARP

The difference between kindness and business is the difference between doing something for your neighbor and doing something for yourself.

One warm July afternoon about twenty years ago, I was building a dam with my brother in a brook which runs along a public road. While we were laying sod and mud over the row of big stones in the stream, a lady drove up in her carriage and stopped.

"Boys," she said, "I wonder if you'd please pick a few forget-me-nots for me."

Now Hingham forget-me-nots are famous, and the pool made by our dam was set in a blue bed of them. They grew everywhere except where the horses used to brace themselves with their hoofs as they slid down the shallow gravel bank for a drink in the stream.

It wasn't three minutes before we had enough. The lady said,

"Thank you very much." And as she

took the wet bunch with one hand, she dropped a nickel into the upreached hand of my brother! The carriage rolled away.

It was the first money that he had ever been given for doing anything for someone outside of our family. As he stood looking at it, my father, who was mowing with a scythe across the road, called to him.

"What did she give you, Dallas?"

"Some money," answered the young civil engineer now turned florist.

"You ought not to have taken it," said my father. "Run after her and give it back."

My brother ran honestly and well, but the horse and carriage had climbed the long hot hill and had vanished in the woods. He returned for an explanation.

"If you were selling bunches of forget-me-nots as the high school boys do down by the Hingham station," said my father, "you would be in business selling flowers. Everyone would know it and those who wanted flowers should pay for them. But when a person asks you to do a kindness that takes almost no time and is so easy as turning around in your pool and picking those flowers, you should do it as a friend and you should be glad that you can do something for the person who asks you. If you are picking flowers for a living or if you must spend many hours and go many miles to pick flowers, then the person who asks you to do so will pay for your making that your business. But don't put a cost on a kindness."

Raymond agreed and placed the lantern on the window seat.

Somehow he did not go to sleep very fast. Finally he dozed and was awakened suddenly by what sounded like rattling bones. "I was surely dreaming," Raymond thought and was about to doze off again when once more he heard the sound. There was no doubt about it. It was right there in the room near the window, and to Raymond it sounded like rattling bones.

He lay very still in his bed and thought. He remembered how the people at the party had screamed when they first saw the skeleton and later laughed at their fears. Most likely there was no harm in these rattling bones, either. He would turn on the light at the head of the bed and see.

Raymond reached for the light switch, but kept looking toward the window. When the light flashed on, he found he was looking right at the pumpkin lantern. Not a sign of bones in the room. As Raymond got out of bed and started toward the lantern, two fat little mice scampered out of the lantern to the floor and frisked out of sight.

"Rattling bones!" Raymond laughed to himself. "It was mice rattling the nuts."

I'll just put the nuts on the bookcase where they will be safe."

After putting the nuts out of reach, Raymond went back to bed. "Nothing to be afraid of in the sound of rattling bones," he thought, "nor in many other things. Just find out what it is and fear leaves."



### Hobgoblins

By MARGARET TOD RITTER

Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry,  
Here they come, those little furry  
Desperadoes: goblins, witches,  
Jumping high across the ditches,  
Brandishing long, awful switches.  
Shut our eyes and scurry, scurry;  
Now they're coming in a flurry!  
Straight ahead is light and shelter,  
But they're coming helter-skelter.  
Hurry faster, hurry, hurry,—  
Home at last and we should worry!

# THE BEACON CLUB

## The Editor's Post Box

60 SILVER ST.,  
DOVER, N. H.

*Dear Editor:* I should like very much to be a member of the Beacon Club and wear its pin. I am nine years old. I am in the fourth grade of school. I go to the Universalist Church and Sunday school. My teacher's name is Mrs. Chase; our minister's name is Rev. Harriet Robinson. I should like very much to have someone correspond with me. I belong to the Willing Workers' Club of the church.

Yours truly,  
FRANCES CHASE.

MOTOR ROUTE "B",  
EUGENE, ORE.

*Dear Editor:* I enjoy *The Beacon* very much and I should like to wear the Club pin. I am eight years old and am in the third grade at school. My Sunday-school teacher's name is Miss Betty Allen; our minister's name is Mr. White-smith.

Yours truly,  
MARCIA ANNE JUDKINS.

## The First Sling

By HAROLD GREEN (AGE 14)

THE rain fell steadily outside and the forest was damp and dreary. The animals had all taken to shelter and the only thing that seemed to be living was the smoke curling up through a hole in the top of a cave.

Here within the cave it was dry and comfortable. The primitive family, composed of Sam, the cave boy, his sister and parents, lay near the fire on skins of animals. The fire was still a novelty; they had been initiated into the use of it by a wandering caveman.

It was still the era called the "Dawn of Time," and little by little people were beginning to get civilized. Mankind had taken to caves because they no longer cared to live like animals in the trees.

The cave in which Sam lived was like the others. When Sam's father had discovered it he cleaned it thoroughly and made it comfortable, filling up holes in the walls and floor, placing animals' skins on the floor and cutting ventilating holes in the top of the cave.

In this environment Sam and his sister had been raised and they had grown up to be strong and robust children; their features were better than those of their parents whose faces bore a little resemblance to the great apes living in the trees.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.  
OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.  
OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

202 4TH ST., SOUTH,  
VIRGINIA, MINN.

*Dear Editor:* I should like to be a member of the Beacon Club and wear its pin. I go to the Unitarian Church in Virginia. Reverend Milma Lappala is our minister. I am a faithful reader of *The Beacon*. I am seventeen years old and am in the 12-A grade. I would be very pleased to correspond with other girls of my age.

Yours truly,  
GERTRUDE TAMMINEN.

BASSETT, VA.

*Dear Editor:* I am twelve years old. I go to the Dunkard Church. Our minister's name is Rev. P. E. Bowman. He is my Sunday-school teacher, too. I should like to join the Beacon Club and wear its pin. I like to read *The Beacon* very much.

Yours sincerely,  
VIOLET SPENCER.

Sam, with the sense of mischievousness that is ingrained in every boy, was snapping his girdle at his sister who loudly resented it. Thinking to hurt her more he fastened a stone in it, but the missile flew through the air and hit the opposite wall. That gave him an idea and he aimed the girdle so that the stone would hit the object he wanted it to.

After practicing the whole day he had become quite adept with it. That night he did not fall asleep immediately but lay awake thinking of the wonderful time he would have with his precious invention on the morrow.

Suddenly his mind cleared. He had heard stealthy footsteps. Looking about him he saw slowly approaching his sleeping sister a large saber-toothed tiger, its glistening fangs extended for the expected kill.

Quietly but with alacrity his groping hand found a piece of sharp flint and fastened it in the girdle. He aimed carefully and then launched the deadly missile on its journey, a journey that ended when the flint pierced the tiger's brain. The creature fell backward, howling terrifyingly, and then died, the crimson blood still gushing out of its head.

Sam was besieged with questions about the wonder he had wrought but he told them that he had done it easily with his sling, for it was a sling and the first in the history of mankind.

## Puzzlers

### Twisted Names of Boys

1. Kide.
2. Nojh.
3. Rrawle.
4. Ntleareo.
5. Eogreg.
6. Ybbil.
7. Yrjer.
8. Dolewo.
9. Rgroe.
10. Farscin.

NELTJE SCHOFIELD WESTON.

### Word Square

Expressions of pain.  
A body of water.

A nest.

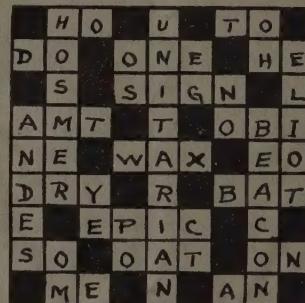
Ingenuous.

A sign of contempt.

—Scattered Seeds.

### Answers to Puzzles in No. 2

Crossword Puzzle.—



*Pied Verse.*—Along the path of a useful life

Will heart's ease ever bloom;

The busy mind has no time to think

Of sorrow or care or gloom;

And anxious thoughts may be swept away

As we busily wield a broom.

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